**ZION’S MESSENGER**

**November 2020 + Zion Lutheran Church + 269-367-4817**

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 As I write this article, we have not yet had the election though at some point in early November, I hope that we will know the results. Election season is always contentious with so many negative campaign ads thrown at us. This has always irritated me. This year has been the most difficult and divisive election season I have ever seen. I will be very glad when it is over.

 As I write, we are now seeing what could be the second wave of the coronavirus, raging through the world again. Our own part of Michigan is certainly seeing big spikes in new cases and this is cause for a lot of worry and anxiety. We may have a lot of questions. Will schools end up going virtual if they are not already? Will our church stay open through this season? Is it going to be dangerous to do simple things like grocery shopping again? I sure do not know the answers to these questions but I pray that we remain as safe as possible as long as people continue to wear masks in public, practice social distancing, wash their hands and stay home if exposed or sick. As long as everyone who comes to church does these things, I pray that we will be able to remain open. I certainly did not expect to still be writing about this now, back when it all started in March but here we are.

 There are a lot of unknowns as we enter the end of this year and beginning of next year. Many of us will probably be very glad to see 2020 come to an end as it has been a terrible year both communally and personally for many of us.

 There are so many negative things that we could focus on as we head to Thanksgiving and the beginning of the holiday season. But in spite of those things, we do have a lot to be thankful for. We need a spirit of thankfulness to get us through this crazy time.

 Here is my list of some things that I am thankful for this year:

 I am so thankful that Terry is alive to celebrate Thanksgiving with me this year after his very critical illness a year ago and I am thankful for the medical interventions that saved his life.

 I am thankful for the internet and the ability to maintain a social life, particularly on Facebook, when it has not been able to be done in person.

 I am thankful for the most beautiful fall that we had this year. The colors were so much more vibrant than I have seen in the last few years.

 I am thankful every time I see farm equipment go by the parsonage and watch the farmers’ harvest. The weather has been very favorable for a bountiful harvest this year.

 I am thankful for you, the people of Zion, as we have worked together to get through a lot of challenges. You have been willing to adapt to new ways of doing things and I am particularly thankful that we were able to have drive-in worship in the parking lot this summer!

 I am thankful for the way that the family of Zion reaches out to one another and to our community.

 I am thankful that we have been able to worship in the church again, even with doing it in different ways.

 I am thankful for God’s love and care for all of us in all seasons of our lives.

 Let’s focus on the good things that God has done for us no matter how we will spend Thanksgiving this year because God is so good! Come Ye Thankful People Come…..

Pastor Becky +

**COUNCIL UPDATE**

 Unfortunately, there was not a quorum for the October 13th Council meeting. The four members present had informal discussion on many topics. Pastor shared a devotion on love and rules pointing out that both have the same goal – that we get along. The devotional suggested we let love and joy lead the way in life.

 Informal discussion included assessing how the services are going since moving back into the sanctuary. Overall, the pandemic reopening plan has been implemented and seems to be working well. We are continuing to use the communion sets. Tara was able to find some less expensive sets online and ordered them for us to use. It was noted that while humming has been allowed, it needs to be done quietly to minimize the spread of droplets especially as we enter the cold weather months.

 We also discussed the annual meeting scheduled for January 17, 2021. There will be several items for the congregation to vote on including board appointments and the budget for 2021 so we do need to hold this meeting. Discussion was held on the possibility of having the option of attending in person or through a Zoom meeting. Discussion was held on the upcoming Advent and Christmas seasons. We will again have an Advent devotional booklet. We will also hold the Longest Night (Blue Christmas) services. There are several possibilities for Christmas Eve including offering several service times, having one time with a shorter service geared toward families with small children, possibly asking for reservations to ensure social distancing can be maintained. Paul’s exploring the acquisition of a camera to allow us to live-stream the entire service if our internet service is strong enough to allow it. Additional discussion and planning will be done at the Board of Worship Planning.

 Council set a make-up meeting for October 27th.

**COUNCIL AND BOARD SERVICE**

It’s that time of the year again when volunteers are sought for election to a variety of Board and Council positions. The Nominations Committee will be convening soon to begin their work of ensuring we are able to continue our work in all areas of the church. The Council asks that we all be in prayer during this time to consider how we might serve and help in the work of our congregation and in service to our Lord. If you have an interest in any specific area of service, please let any of the Council members or Pastor know. Thank you.

**WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDY**

Women’s Bible Study will meet Tuesday, November 17 at 1 PM in the Fireside Room. Hope to see you there.

**MEN’S WEDNESDAY COFFEE**

The men’s Wednesday coffee is canceled until further notice due to the rise in Covid 19 cases.

**THANKOFFERING SERVICE**

Zion will have a "Covid-style" Thankoffering Service on Sunday, November 15th during the normal worship hour.  Jolene Griffin will lead us in the ELCA Thankoffering Service.  We will not be having an outside speaker, but Ruth Brecheisen-Hindman will be providing special music for the service.  There will be a brief talk on where our Thankoffering monies go.  The ZLCW will have a basket out in the narthex during Sundays in November, so people gave can contribute their special offerings

**“GOD’S WORK, OUR HANDS”**

**MANNA’S MARKET/**

**SHEPHERD’S FOOD DRIVE**

 Thank you to all who so generously gave during the month of September for the first of our God’s Work, Our Hands projects this year. We were able to gather a large amount of food to distribute to Manna’s Market and the Shepherds as well as monetary contributions for Manna’s Market. There was an amazing amount of baked beans, peanut butter, tuna fish, macaroni and cheese dinners, soups, milk, and other great food items. On Friday, October 16th, Dan Utterback and Martha Yoder loaded the donations and delivered them. Dan reported the Shepherds were very appreciate of the three large bags of food that he delivered to them. Martha took the donations to Manna’s Market and indicated they were extremely grateful. The woman who received the donation said it was a tremendous outpouring of love and so many will benefit from Zion’s generosity. This project was led by the Board of Evangelism.

 In announcing God’s Work, Our Hands 2020, the ELCA in America said that this is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbors.

**“GOD’S WORK, OUR HANDS”**

**PAJAMA, UNDERWEAR,**

**SOCK DRIVE**

 We continued our God’s Work, Our Hands projects with a children’s pajama, underwear, and sock drive during the month of October. This project is sponsored by the Board of Fellowship and led by Carol Engle and Jolene Griffin.

 We received so very many donations.  For the boys, we had 16 pajamas, 4 baby pajamas, 38 briefs and 145 pairs of socks. For the girls, we had 19 pajamas, 5 baby pajamas, 55 panties, 5 undershirts and 149 pairs of socks. We also had $110.00 monetary donations. We want to thank Thrivent for their $250.00 Action Team grant that made it possible to purchase some of the items. All have been taken to Manna's Market.  We are blessed to be able to share with children in our area.

**THANK YOU!**

Thank you so much for your show of appreciation for my work to provide music during the outdoor drive-in services. The congregation of Zion are most wonderful people! It is such a joy to be part of this congregation and to serve where I can. I was overwhelmed by your show of love and support with the beautiful gift basket and gift card on October 4th. It was totally unexpected and so incredibly generous. I am enjoying everything in the basket and treasure the words of the card. Thank you and God bless you. Martha Yoder

**LAKEWOOD COMMUNITY COUNCIL CHRISTMAS BASKETS**

  Christmas Baskets will be a little different this year. This is a cooperative effort of the entire community, especially the churches.  The LCC met recently and made some careful and difficult decisions to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of all volunteers, community groups & recipients.

  The CDC guidelines will be followed when possible. All will wear masks in the building; helpers will be welcome, but please contact Kay ahead of time. Schools and churches will NOT be collecting food items.  The food items will be purchased to speed the process and make it easier to keep safe distances between volunteers.  Delivery volunteers will leave the packages on doorsteps and not enter homes.

  Mary Smith has received an Action Grant from Thrivent Financial to purchase the **children's gifts and a limited number of socks and mittens for children**.  You may contribute any size hats, warm winter mittens/gloves and socks. Especially needed are water-resistant mittens or gloves. We will take Zion's contributions to Central United Methodist Church Wed., Dec. 9 before noon. Claude has received an Action Grant from Thrivent Financial to purchase an orchard crate of applies for each basket.

 As conditions in our community progress, plans might change between now and Dec. 8. The LCC will do their best to communicate them as the time nears.  Thank you for your understanding.  The group of church representatives indicated that all of us want this valuable ministry to continue. They suggest churches might take a special offering.  Any way you can help will be appreciated and we thank you for your faithful continued support!

**Zion can help**:

* Pray for this ministry, that hearts will be touched!
* Send monetary contributions to cover meat certificates and other purchases. **This is an especially great need** this year.
* Send volunteers to help package, wrap and deliver baskets:

**Calendar:**

-Tues.,  Dec. 8, (7 p.m. to 9 p.m.): Set up. This is tentative; \* please call ahead.

-Wed., Dec. 9, (9 a.m. to 2:30 pm): Sort food & pack boxes

-Thurs., Dec 10, (9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.): Pack boxes & gift bags

-Fri., Dec 11, (9 a.m. to noon): Wrap boxes & transfer gifts; this is tentative,

**\* please call ahead**

Sat., Dec. 12, (9 a.m. to noon): Deliver boxes to families

Other helpful information: Application forms are available in the office if you know of folks who may need this assistance.  Please send applications to \*\*Kay or to \*\*\*Central U.M. by the middle of November if possible.

\* Phone for Central United Methodist Church 616-374-8861

\* Phone for Kay: 269-945-4518,

\*\* Address for Kay: 2291 E M43 HWY., Hastings MI 49508

\*\*\* Address for Central United Methodist Church: 912 Fourth Ave., Lake Odessa, MI 48849

Thank you,

Mary Smith

**SPECIALS IN NOVEMBER**

**Anniversaries**

27-Linden & Judy Fisher

**Baptisms**

01-Will Plummer

05-Nick Bite

12-Ivy McDowell

16-Lisa Hetchler

18-Caroline Brecheisen

21-Taylor MacKenzie

21-Jeff MacKenzie

22-Orianna (Ramos) Murray

**Birthdays**

01-Kim Meade

06-Carol Engle

08-Olive McDowell

11-Jason Griffin

11-Emil Meyers

24-Mark Bite

24-Rebecka Nelson

27-Kole Hokanson

30-Josh Wright

**SERVING IN NOVEMBER**

**(All Schedules subject to change as we monitor the Covid-19 situation.)**

**Altar Guild**

Brenda Bite

Kayla Cole

Rebecka Nelson

**SUNDAYS IN NOVEMBER**

**November 1- Communion Indoor**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie, Mike Johnson

**November 8- Communion Indoor**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Claude Smith

Offering Counters: Mary Makley, Martha Yoder

**November 15- Women’s Thankoffering**

Elder: Paul Meade

Trustee: Tom Krikke

Offering Counters: Jerry Engle, Brenda Bite

**November 22- Communion Indoor**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Jolene Griffin

Trustee: Jerry Engle

Offering Counters: Doug Mackenzie, Mike Johnson

**November 29- Communion Indoor**

Pastor Becky Ebb-Speese

Elder: Dan Utterback

Trustee: Claude Smith

Offering Counters: Mary Makley and Martha Yoder